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AUTHOR	Montoya, Jose R.
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ABSTRACT

Intended as a tool for personnel in the helping professions who work with Chicano migrant families and have little or nor prior knowledge of their culture or history, the manual presents a historical and cultural perspective of the Mexican American migrant families. The six units cover Mexican American history, cultural awareness, Mexican American family, traditional medical approaches, situations affecting migrant families, and migrant child welfare. Unit 1 briefly summarizes Mexican American history in the Southwest and lists terminology of cultural identification. Unit 2 presents the classical definition of "culture," examines cultural awareness from a subjective and an objective perspective, and relates cultural awareness to social change. The next two units present a portrayal of the contemporary Mexican American family and a summary of traditional approaches to the practice of medicine found in many Mexican American communities. Unit 5 describes situational factors affecting migrant families, due to environmental conditions found in their lifestyle, which may lead to child neglect. Unit 6 provides a summary of migrant child welfare services. Each unit includes a description, goals and objectives, rationale, and content. A list of approximately 50 resource materials on various topics about Chicanos concludes the manual. (NQA)

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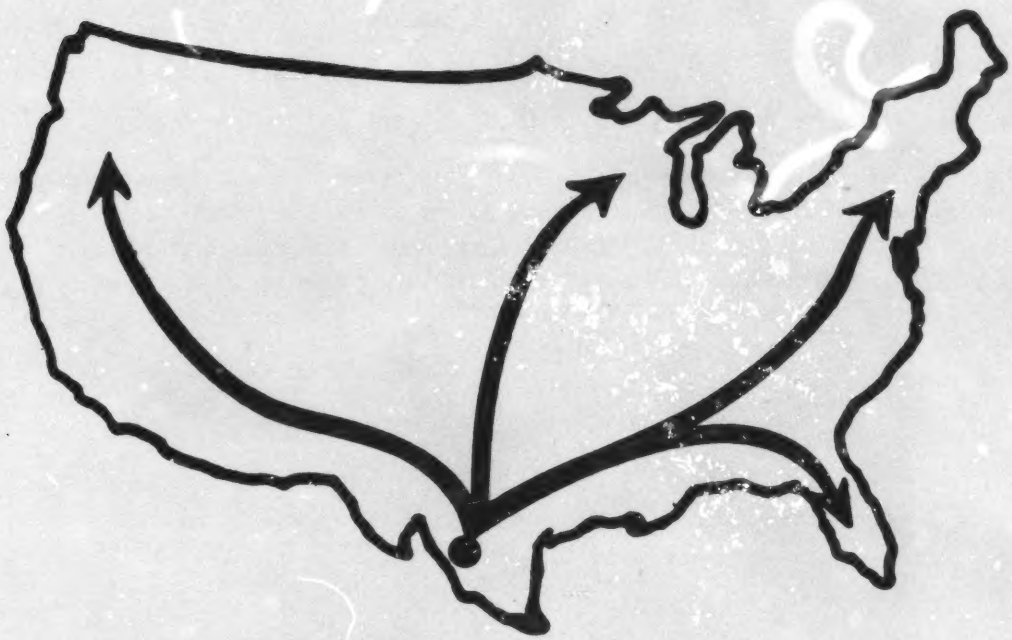

Prepared By: Texas Migrant Council, Inc.
National Resource Center on Child Abuse and Neglect for Mexican-American Migrants

Compiled By: Jose R. Montoya, Resource Specialist & Trainer

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INTRODUCTION

During recent years there has been an increasing awareness of the great need for culturally compatible social services and staff to increase the participation of minorities. One of the main problems faced by those who work with Mexican-American migrants is a tendency to equate different with inferior. The assumption and misconceptions which arise as a result of this assimilationist attitude, influence the way individuals are perceived and consequently, how they are dealt with. It is for this reason that an awareness and understanding of culture is so important for those who work with Mexican-Americans. If an impact is to be made on migrant child welfare, changes are needed. These changes, however, must come from within the existing agencies and personnel rather than trying to change migrants to fit traditional services and staff.

The purpose of this training aid, therefore, is to present a historical and cultural perspective of the Mexican-American migrant families, in hopes that it will clarify some misconceptions by increasing cultural awareness. It is intended as a tool for personnel in the helping professions who work with Chicano migrant families and children and who have little or no prior knowledge of their culture or history. In no way is this manual intended as a "cure all" but rather as a base from where we can further increase our knowledge of Mexican-American migrant culture and lifestyle. In the last section we have included a list of excellent material on various topics about Chicanos.

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Juan Chavira, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
U.T. Health Science Center
University of Texas
San Antonio, Texas

Guadalupe Gibson, ACSW
Associate Professor
Worden School of Social Service
Our Lady of the Lake University
San Antonio, Texas

Oscar Villarreal
Executive Director
Texas Migrant Council
Laredo, Texas

Resource Center Staff:

Mario Bermea
Director

Daniel Guerrero
Trainer

Martha A. Martinez
Head Trainer

Maria R. Montalvo
Research Associate

UNIT 1

MEXICAN- AMERICAN HISTORY

UNIT # 1 MEXICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Description of Unit:

This module presents a brief summary of Mexican-American History in the Southwest. In addition, terminology of cultural identification will also be presented.

Goals:

1. To present information on the historical development of the Mexican-American people in the Southwest.
2. Provide the participants with the opportunity to identify and review examples of terms of cultural identification used by Mexican-Americans.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will be able to identify the various influences that have created the unique, present day culture of the Mexican-American.
2. Participants will be able to identify the impact of Mexican-American culture throughout the Southwest.
3. Participants will be able to identify and trace the development of immigration patterns from Mexico.
4. Participants will be able to distinguish between immigration from Mexico and the internal migration that developed as a result.
5. Participants will be able to identify and list the various terms used by Mexican-Americans as cultural identifiers.

RATIONALE:

Attempts to understand Mexican-American culture and lifestyle should include a review of their historical development as a group. The underlying premise is that many of the cultural characteristics, values, attitudes, lifestyle patterns, and self identification of the group developed throughout their history in the Southwest.

CONTENT:

I. History of the Mexican-American

A. Introduction

B. Conquest of Mexico – 1500

C. An Easy Victory

D. Converting the Indian

E. Outward Expansion

F. Anglo Invasion

G. Frontier in Conflict

H. Mexican-American War

I. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

J. Mexican-American

K. Modern Mexico and the Southwest

L. Mexican Immigrants on the Labor Market

II. Identification Terminology

A. Spanish-American

B. Mexican-American

C. Latino

D. Hispano

E. La Raza

F. Mestizo

G. Chicano

HISTORY OF THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN

INTRODUCTION

Present-day American society is a consequence of fusions of various cultures which have occurred over a period of several hundred years. In order to understand the present, it is necessary to understand the factors contributing to its development. The Mexican-American is an important element of modern American society. And he, too, is a product of cultural fusions which have occurred over the centuries. His culture, a significant aspect of southwestern American society, has developed from the fusion, first, of Spanish and Mexican Indian cultures and the subsequent introduction of northern Indian, European, Anglo American, and modern Mexican cultures. Thus, to understand the Mexican-American, we must look back in history and trace the various influences that have created his unique, present day culture.

CONQUEST OF MEXICO – 1500

After America was discovered, people of various backgrounds left Spain to seek their fortunes in the New World. Among these was a man named Hernan Cortez, a man who found himself in an age of exploration and discovery that pushed him beyond the boundaries of the world he knew. Such an era would not occur again until man began to feel his way into outer space five centuries later. Rumors, usually false, of fantastic riches in distant unconquered and unexplored regions ran like wildfire and added fuel to the expeditions.

AN EASY VICTORY

The military conquest of Mexico was surprisingly simple. Hernan Cortez led only a handful of soldiers against thousands of Aztec warriors. The Indians; however, being very superstitious, believed that the Spaniards mounted on their horses were gods. Equipped with superior weapons, compared to the swords and spears of the Indians, the Spaniards could kill at far greater distances. The Spaniards also had a different concept of war compared to the Indians, who believed that taking prisoners was more important than killing the enemy on the battlefield. Spanish warfare was not a ceremony but a battle to the death. Add to this, the new diseases brought to America from Europe such as smallpox, typhoid and measles. The native Americans had no natural immunity as the Europeans had, and the diseases decimated Indian populations all over the New World during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With this in mind, the conquest seems less than marvelous.

CONVERTING THE INDIAN

The colonial effort of the Spaniards had two main goals. The first, the idealistic goal, was to save the souls of the Indians. The second, the materialistic goal, was to create a labor force to build a colony. By achieving the first goal, the priests unconsciously achieved the second. The next century was one of superimposing the languages, laws, and institutions of Spain on Indian Mexico. It was a century of conflict between Indian and Spanish ways of life. But it was also a century of some fusion in which Indian and Spanish cultures blended to create a society uniquely American, uniquely Mexican. It was aided, in part, by the mixing of the races. Children were born of Spanish fathers and Indian mothers. At first, these mestizos were accepted by neither group. But as time

passed their numbers increased to the point where today most Mexicans are of mixed Indian and Spanish heritage. The mestizos were the new race of the Americas. They represent the blending of blood and of culture that has produced the modern Mexican and Mexican American.

OUTWARD EXPANSION

As soon as Cortes had conquered the land he called New Spain, the large scale colonization effort began. In the years that followed the Spanish and Spanish-Indian culture spread throughout much of the Americas. Those who migrated during this period, from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, had one thing in common: An overwhelming desire to own land. Their dream of gold and wealth collapsed and land suplanted gold as the key to happiness for the vast majority of settlers in New Spain – land where a man could be his own boss. Mining and agriculture became the key to the future of the colony.

THE ANGLO INVASION

The United States began to pose a new threat to Spanish sovereignty on the northern frontier before the end of the eighteenth century. Before many years had passed, the threat was translated into an invasion of the Spanish frontier and that invasion changed the character of the culture and society of the land. The westward movement of English speaking people had begun soon after England established her first colonies on the Atlantic seaboard. As the lands along the coast were claimed, English colonists began to move inland. This movement characterized the English colonial period and continued, unabated, after the United States had won its independence.

The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 dealt a harsh blow to Spanish security. It brought the United States up to the very borders of Spanish territory. An aggressive young nation looked westward from Louisiana to the Pacific Ocean. Increasing numbers of Americans began to dream of occupying the entire continent. Only 2,000 miles of Spanish territory separated the Americans from fulfillment of that dream. Mexico began her struggle for independence in 1810. For the next eleven years, both Spain and the revolutionary leaders generally ignored the frontier.

FRONTIER IN CONFLICT

Conflict spread rapidly in the first few years that Mexicans and Americans shared the frontier. The conflict between Mexican and Anglo began as a result of the attitudes the two people developed during their earliest contacts. Americans often thought of Mexicans as lazy, cowardly, and backward; Mexicans saw Anglos as arrogant, rude, aggressive, and dishonest. The result of course, was a growing animosity. The situation became still more explosive as some Anglos began seizing lands actually held by Mexican settlers; they attempted to force Mexicans off property that, in some instances, had been held by the same family for generations. Agitated Mexican officials met with little success in driving the squatters off the land. Soon a new and serious conflict shook the frontier – a conflict between Mexico and the United States. Its outcome would be the ultimate violence: war between two sovereign nations.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

Both sides began to prepare many months before war was declared. In March, 1845, Mexico broke diplomatic relations with the United States and declared that she considered the annexation of Texas a hostile act. Then, on April 23, Mexico declared that a state of "defensive" war existed.

The long sought war had begun. The Mexicans entered the war confident of victory. But they did not count on the fantastic effort the United States would put into this "little war". The U.S. Congress, in declaring war, authorized a volunteer army of fifty thousand men and appropriated ten million dollars to pay the costs of war. It soon became apparent that Mexico had no chance against the military machine of the United States. The war was short, as wars go. Scarcely a year and a half had passed since the first skirmishes. And the American dream of controlling all the territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific was about to be realized.

TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

The Mexican-American War created unparalleled bitterness and hostility toward the United States, not only in Mexico but throughout Latin America. The basic instrument of this long-lasting bitterness was the treaty that ended the war. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, designed to end the war and increase the territory of the United States, made certain provisions for future relationships between the two countries. Its weakness in this respect, instead of smoothing the path into the future, created new problems. It left loopholes which would lead to future conflicts. Furthermore, Anglos living in the ceded territories cared little for documents. They were going to live as they chose, do as they pleased without regard for a piece of paper. Thus violations of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in spirit and in fact, were a common occurrence from the day it took effect.

The U.S. Government, in assuming the new territories, also assumed responsibility for thousands of Mexicans living there. These people were given the choice of either leaving the conquered territory within one year or becoming American citizens. A few, very few, packed up their belongings and trekked south to land still held by Mexico. Most chose to stay in their established homes, seeing very little difference between one government and another. By staying, these people, whose ancestors had first been Spanish subjects and later Mexican citizens, now became American citizens. They became a new element in U.S. society - the Mexican-American.

(Condensed from "A History of the Mexican-American People" by Julian Samora and Patricia Vandil Simon.)

MEXICAN-AMERICAN

Many of the stereotypes that exist today developed between 1848 and 1900. The Anglos had very unfavorable images of the Mexican-American. They saw the Mexican-American as someone that was lazy, dirty, and dishonest. They carried out this stereotypes because it was practical socially and economically. The Mexican-Americans were seen as conquered people.

MODERN MEXICO AND THE SOUTHWEST

It can be said that the Mexican and his chicano brother have built the west and the southwest. Their labor provided most to the accomplishments we see in this part of the country today. From the industries (mining, railroads, roads, manufacturing) to the agriculture. The culture has contributed much to the lifestyle of the dominant society. The impact of the culture can be seen throughout the Southwest.

Today there are approximately 10,000,000 – 15,000,000 individuals in the country today who share this history and culture. They have a terrific impact on the society as a whole but even more of an impact in the Southwest.

Central and South American also share the same culture and history. If we include the Carribbean we can see that an awareness and knowledge of the culture is very important.

MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS ON THE LABOR MARKET

Immigration from Mexico began in earnest about 1900. The impetus toward it was two-fold. Within Mexico, the terrible poverty of the masses under the regime of Porfirio Diaz, prompted thousands to move northward for a living. In the mid 1890's to make matters worse, Diaz instituted agricultural policies that resulted in most of the land coming into large private holdings, while 95 percent of the ten million poor were left landless. Beginning in 1910, of course, a further decade of revolution and political instability would prompt many Mexicans to emigrate. But if Mexico itself offered sufficient reasons to leave, the United States also provided the great lure of jobs. The labor market, particularly in the Southwest, required a large supply of cheap, unskilled labor for large-scale agriculture, the railroads, and the mines. These were also incentives for many to go further north to the Midwest, so that many areas of the United States that had never known Mexicans became acquainted with them for the first time.

The immigration; however, was a highly transient one. Although many Mexicans did eventually settle in this country, it is probably that they had not originally intended to work and wages provided the attraction, but Mexico was still home, and money was sent there to help support the family. And it was to Mexico that the immigrants returned when work slackened off north of the Rio Grande.

The immigration from Mexico also acted as an economic pressure on Mexican-Americans of the Southwest. The immigrants were willing to accept jobs for lower wages than native American workers, and, in much of the Southwest, this meant they were competing directly with native-born members of La Raza. The Mexican-Americans, therefore, frequently inaugurated a migration of their own, moving north, where jobs were more plentiful and wages higher and where they could exploit their advantage of being able to speak English. (Wayne Moquin 1971)

DEFINITIONS SPANISH-AMERICAN

Spanish-American usually denotes Spanish surnamed individual. Technically speaking; however, a Spanish-American is an individual whose ancestry is directly linked to Spain and not indirectly by way of Mexico. In reality, there are probably fewer than 150,000 Spanish-American in the country today. One study indicated that since 1519, when the Spanish landed, the total Spanish-American population to this day would only be approximately 500,000.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN

An American born citizen of Mexican ancestry. The individual may be first generation or his ancestry may be dating back several hundred years. This individual is indigenous to this country.

LATINO

Usually, synonymous with Latin. The term is used frequently in the Southwest interchangeably with Mexicans. However, in the wider sense, it can be used to describe any Central or South American nationality.

HISPANO

Hispano is an umbrella term. This can apply literally to any Spanish speaking group with their cultural origins and history derived from the Spanish. This would include such diversified groups as the Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Bolivians and perhaps even the Spanish speaking Phillipinos.

LA RAZA

Literally translated, this term means "race". Again, this is an all emcompassing term used to define any and all of the Spanish speaking subgroups.

MESTIZO

Symbolized by the three faced image often seen in the Southwest. The Mestizo is or can be the Mexican, the Chicano or the Spanish-American for that matter. Traditionally, the Mestizo is symbolized by a Spanish father and an Indian mother uniting to create an entirely new group neither Spanish nor Indian but a mixture of both, i.e., Mexican.

CHICANO

Chicano is used to refer to a state of mind or ideological stance in a person who is a Mexican-American. This term used to have a vulgar and somewhat negative connotation. It implies a knowledge of one's history, ancestry, heredity. Also, it denotes a positive self-concept based on self-pride.

UNIT 2

CULTURAL AWARENESS

UNIT # 2 CULTURAL AWARENESS

DESCRIPTION OF UNIT:

This module presents the classical definition of "culture" and examines cultural awareness from a subjective as well as an objective perspective. In addition, this module relates cultural awareness of social change.

GOALS:

1. To present information on the traditional definition of culture and review some of the problems (misconceptions) faced by those who work with Mexican Americans.

2. To present culture as interpreted by the minorities themselves; culture at the subjective level.

3. To present information in terms of what society has done to the Mexican-American and how Mexican-Americans today are reacting to past and current treatment.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will be able to identify the classical definition of culture provided by Edward Tylor.

2. Participants will be able to recognize that assumptions are made about culture which influence how individuals are perceived and how they are dealt with.

3. Participants will be able to recognize that Mexican-Americans have become more conscious of the subjective aspects of their culture, are more consciously maintaining it, and are aggressively defending their right to practice their own culture.

4. Participants will be able to recognize and differentiate between "self evaluation" "self discovery" and "self expression" of awareness.

5. Participants will be able to recognize Mexican-American reaction to past and current treatment by the dominant society.

RATIONALE: The importance of cultural stereotypes is that they influence behavior. For example, the problems of minorities in society are usually attributed to the characteristics of the minority to which he belongs. The implications of such a perspective tremendously influences how one tries to help individual minority members to overcome their problems. If, however, one recognizes how the dominant society has contributed, and continues to contribute, to the minoritie's problem a more diversified approach will be used in trying to help minority members. Attempts will be made to bring changes throughout the whole of society so that change will occur at all levels of society, not only at the minority level. Such an approach is not only more realistic, but will also be of much greater benefit to minorities.

"OBJECTIVE" AWARENESS OF CULTURE

The classical definition of culture provided by Edward Tylor says, "Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Horton and Hunt (1976:46) go on to say, "Culture is everything which is socially learned and shared by the members of a society." From a sociological perspective every group has a culture and every individual who belongs to a particular group shares a common culture (or some might say, a subculture) with other members of his group. These shared ways of behaving and believing are what permit persons from one culture to recognize those from another culture as being different, with a tendency to equate different with inferior.

One of the major problems faced by those who are trying to help individual minority members is the conceptions (or misconceptions) which they have about that individual simply because of the group with which they identify him. Assumptions are made about his culture which influences how one perceives him and how one deals with him. Whether the assumptions are true or not is less important than whether the individual dealing with the minority believes them or not. It is for this reason that awareness of, and sensitivity to, minority cultures is so important.

The problem is really three-fold: First, the dominant society and those who identify with it feel that they know all that is necessary about individual minority cultures. Second, the perceptions of the dominant society view minority characteristics as pathological or somehow reflective of an illness that can be solved only by becoming like the majority. The third dominant society assumes that all the members of a particular minority share the same characteristics, that is, minority members are all alike. Each aspect of this three-fold problem needs to be examined carefully.

A difficulty that all minorities confront is the large number of stereotypes which exist concerning their values and their habits. Stereotypes usually reflect the prejudice of members of the dominant society and usually are negative in character. Blacks are lazy. Mexican-Americans are alcoholics. The importance of the stereotypes and misconceptions is that they influence the behavior of members of the dominant society and how they interact with minority members. This, in turn, influences the behavior of minority members who after a time may actually begin to behave in the ways the dominant society expects them to act.

A study of Whitehead and King (1973) concerning attitudes of managers toward Mexican-Americans were expected and perceived to be different in the following ways: 1) less favorable in authority relations, 2) more dependent than other employees, 3) subject to different supervisory techniques and standards of performance, and 4) show less initiative in authority relations. Overall, managers were more dissatisfied with Mexican-Americans than with other workers.

Such attitudes on the part of managers creates a self-fulfilling prophecy which makes the improvement of the socio-economic status of Mexican-Americans much more difficult. The difference in attitudes of managers toward Mexican-Americans and non-Mexican-Americans is communicated implicitly and explicitly through job roles assigned, compensation, supervisory techniques, training opportunities, and interpersonal relations, often resulting in the sets of behavior which the managers expect. The managers' attitudes do have a detrimental effect on both performance of and opportunities for Mexican-Americans; yet, the difference is due to the supervisors' attitudes, not to the performance capabilities of Mexican-Americans. Although this study concerns Mexican-Americans, one would predict similar findings in studies of other minorities.

Perceived cultural differences were the reasons given by the managers for Mexican-American workers being different from non-Mexican-Americans. This is reflective of the second aspect of

the problem being discussed. The problem of minorities in the job market and elsewhere are usually attributed to the characteristics of the minority to which he belongs. A minority member's culture is blamed for whatever problem he has, not the dominant society. The culture of the minority is what holds him back, what keeps him from progressing. The majority culture represents health and well-being. Hence, if the minority member is to become healthy, he must give up his old ways and adopt those of the majority.

The implications in the economic arena of such a perspective tremendously influences how one tries to help individual minority members to overcome their problem. If the minority is to blame then, if change comes, it must come from the minority. Little or no attempts will be made to change the institutions, societal structure, and/or attitudes of the dominant society since they did not create the problem. The dominant society, thereby, avoids any sense of responsibility (or guilt) for what has occurred, while the minority member is made to feel that there is something wrong with him.

If, on the other hand, one recognizes how the dominant society has contributed, and continues to contribute, to the minorities' problem a more diversified approach will be used in trying to help minority members. Attempts will be made to bring changes throughout the whole of society so that change will occur at all levels of society, not only at the minority level. Such an approach is not only more realistic, but will also be of much greater benefit to minorities.

The final aspect related to an awareness of minority cultures is the tendency to view all members of a particular group without regard for individual differences. One perceives only what he wants to see and ignores characteristics that do not fit one's stereotype. When exceptions do occur, comments are made that he is not like other members of his minority.

Actually, each minority is a very heterogeneous group. Think of how Native Americans are grouped as one when in reality they are composed of a large number of tribes. Blacks originally came from a variety of African tribes while Mexican-Americans historically have been arriving in this country at varying periods of time resulting in varying experiences with the domiant society. This is not to say that each minority does not tend to have things which are shared with other members of the same group, but variation is the rule, not the exception.

In dealing with minorities some of the factors contributing to differences should be kept in mind. Geographical differences are important. For example, Mexican-Americans in New Mexico are not the same as those from Texas. Rural-urban ways vary when a rural family places a greater than ethnic or racial similarities so that a middle-class Black may have more in common with a middle-class white than with a lower class Black. Generational variability may create difficulty in trying to understand minorities (as well as creating difficulties within a particular minority) as seen in the more activist and militant youth of today. Finally, the degree of acculturation (or familiarity with the ways of the dominant society) varies considerably among members of a particular group. This influences how they interact with the dominant society and their ability to deal more effectively with the majority.

Only if one keeps these differences in mind and deals with persons on an individual basis can some of the needs of minorities begin to be met. But majority (and minority) images and expectations must be changed first, before one can begin to deal with the individual and with the problems related to his being the member of a minority in a white-dominant society.

SUBJECTIVE AWARENESS OF CULTURE

Culture at the subjective level means the cultural experiences of the minorities themselves. It is very difficult therefore, for a Mexican-American to explain or to demonstrate what it is like to be a Mexican-American. The same can be said for both Blacks and Native Americans. Culture

at the subjective level involves all the elements found at the objective level – knowledge, arts, crafts, architecture, religion, ideas, as seen, as lived, as interpreted by the minorities themselves. A person cannot experience culture unless he or she is a member of that culture. However, the fact that one cannot experience a certain culture does not mean that we should not try to understand and appreciate different cultures. The problem arises whenever we perceive differences as deviant and threatening, and proceed to make value judgements about the way other people behave. For example, Mexican-Americans stand much closer to each other than Anglos when engaged in a conversation. Mexican-Americans interpret the interpersonal distance of Anglos as a sign of their "cold" personality and character. Anglos think of Mexicans as "pushy" because they keep getting closer and closer. A Mexican-American child is taught to lower his eyes whenever he is being scolded or reprimanded. This behavior is a sign of respect, but an Anglo teacher who insists that a child "look her in the eye" interprets this behavior an indicative of a "shifty" character. Somehow we fail to realize and understand the fact that people have a right to be different. Differences do not necessarily make a person "cold", "pushy", or "shifty".

Because of more recent developments Mexican-Americans have become more conscious of the subjective aspects of their culture, are more consciously maintaining it, and are aggressively defending their right to practice their own culture. This development is a result of the awareness that has come to Mexican-Americans as a recognizably different population within a larger, more complex society. This awareness has usually come in three forms:

(A) Self Evaluation

(B) Self Discovery

(C) Self Expression

Self evaluation is perhaps best expressed in the opening lines of the poem "I Am Joaquin:" "I'm Joaquin, lost in a world of confusion . . .". Self evaluation almost always begins with an attempt at untangling and making sense out of a multitude of conflicting images and messages. Why aren't we allowed to speak Spanish? Why is the Mexican always the bandit? Why is the Anglo the one who always gives orders? Why does the government destroy our barrios? Why do Mexican children have to dress like George Washington? The main questions always seems to be, if my people and my culture are always defined as bad or inferior, then, as a Mexican-American I must also be bad and inferior. Confusion comes from our desire to disbelieve this confusion, but our schooling and our homes often have not given us the tools to reason why this conclusion is false. Some have concluded that "being Mexican" is indeed undesireable, give up, and become absorbed in the so called melting pot. Others with some knowledge or with a simple gut feeling decide that "being Mexican" is not bad, and begin the process of self evaluation.

Self evaluation essentially means taking stock of yourself and the environment immediately around you. Evaluation of the culture at the subjective level is not done in terms of economic advancement or in terms of conspicuous material possessions. Evaluation is done in terms of the feelings of security, warmth, and affection that the culture gives us. It is more than just a stimulus for hunger; it is a symbol of home and family life. Our barrios, with brightly colored pastel houses, with plants growing in coffee cans and with children playing in the street reflect a sense of security and a sense of belonging. Our interpretation of religion, our sainthood cults, our tendency to personalize the Virgin Mary and the Supreme Being perhaps best illustrate the warmth of our extended kinship and the value of close personal relationships. We could continue to cite cultural experiences – our food, our music, our literature – but the point would still be the same: The

greatest value of culture at the subjective level is the sense of pride, identity, and positive self-image it gives to its members.

Once the process of self evaluation is begun and develops, it arouses a desire to know more about this group with which you identify. Thus begins a search of uniqueness, a search for the origin and development of the group — a sense of the past, a historical evaluation. As we discussed in the first session, the history of the Spanish-speaking people in the Southwest is both exciting and tragic. This historical process develops a sense of pride to the degree that we understand and appreciate the discoveries, the contributions, and the courage of our people. The images of brown-skinned, Spanish speaking people crossing mountains and deserts, discovering canyons, rivers, mountains; establishing cities such as Los Angeles, Albuquerque, San Antonio, San Augustin; and giving of themselves and their resources leads to the conclusion that our belonging is not contingent merely on our — or our parents — having crossed the Rio Grande. Our belonging is based on the historical and cultural reality of this region. History not only gives us a sense of belonging; it also gives us a sense of accomplishment.

History, however, also brings a sense of frustration. Frustration from the fact that our people have been the objects of exploitation and subjects of poverty since the Spaniards first landed in Mexico. Frustration from the fact that our present day struggles are not different from the struggles of conscious reformers a century ago. Yet, just knowing that there were others before us gives our cause a sense of continuity, but perhaps more important, our history provides us with heroes, with causes, with documents, with inspiring rhetoric that reflects our identity and our concerns better than the history we learned in school. Miguel Hidalgo, Benito Juarez, Emiliano Zapata, Elfego Baca become more than names or pictures; in a sense they become both models and proof that feelings, concerns, and ideas can be transformed into realities.

In a sense, self expression arises out of this frustration. It begins with a feeling of having been cheated — all this history, all these experiences, all this energy, all this creativity has been stifled and denied to us because it fails to meet with the approval of the dominant majority. It arises out of a desire to tell and to retell the feelings, hopes, and pride of a newly found identity and belonging. This very subjective desire perhaps accounts for the reason that the first examples of self-expression come in art forms — music, poetry, theatre, painting. These art forms project cultural images, cultural symbols, seeking to establish awareness and cultural identity. At the same time, art forms are more aesthetically pleasing and attract a broader spectrum of the general population. Other forms of self expression follow: academics, politics, religion, media, business — yet all attempt to make more relevant and to promote a feeling of security for ourselves within the institutions and environment of the larger society. It is at this point where we are making more sense for ourselves that we create a greater sense of confusion in society at large.

Confusion in society at large comes from a feeling that we are flaunting ourselves and our culture in everybody's face. This conclusion is not necessarily true. We are flaunting our culture; yes, but merely at ourselves. After years of being deprived we are finally able to express who we are; what we are; and what we want to do. A second source of confusion in society at large comes from a lack of understanding — especially from monolingual and monocultural persons — that some persons can profess allegiance to and be confortable in two languages and two cultures. Therefore, instead of assuming that we are flaunting our culture, it would be perhaps much simpler and less threatening to assume that we are trying to share our culture. Perhaps we sometimes are too anxious for others to share our self discovery and to join in our self expression.

One fact which we must carefully clarify is that the actual experience of culture is not a uniform, homogeneous experience even among Mexican-Americans. Past experience colors what a person actually does, the way he or she behaves. Even though as a general population group Mexican-American share a common language, common traditions and low socioeconomic status;

there are marked differences in cultural experiences due to historical, geographical, and social class differences. Historically some of us have been here since the seventeenth century and some of us have been here less than one generation. Geographically, some of us live in large urban areas, and some of us live in isolated rural areas; some of us live and work in cold, wet climates, and some of us in hot, dry areas. Some of us are professionals and businessmen, and some of us are migrant farmworkers and unskilled laborers.

It is not unusual for a Mexican-American from Denver to have difficulty in understanding a Mexican-American from San Antonio. The same difficulty in understanding can occur between Mexican-Americans of different social class, i.e., between middle class and lower class Mexican-Americans. The people from Denver will probably speak little or no Spanish, while the people from San Antonio will generally speak mostly Spanish, heavily flavored with the dialect of the streets. What unites Mexican-Americans then is the subjective interpretation of these experiences. We share a common bond in that we share a common origin, a common culture, and a common socio-political status. Whenever an Anglo makes fun of a Mexican, he makes fun of all Mexicans. Whenever Mexicans are denied access to their own language, or are denied employment opportunities, this denial applies to all Mexicans. It is this power relationship that makes us turn to each other and to our cultural experiences for strengths and guidance. And it is this same subjective cultural experience which provides the impetus and goals for social change.

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

"I Am Joaquin" addresses both the minority and non-minority person in terms of what society has done to the Mexican-American and how the Mexican-American today is reacting to past and current treatment. The issue that keeps reappearing, and which activists of all minorities are raising today, is one of exclusion. Mexican-Americans have been excluded from the history books, from the educational system, from employment opportunities, from the judicial system, and from the political decision making process. This exclusion has generally meant ignorance, exploitation, manipulation and poverty. The dominant society has generally looked at these so-called minority problems, and blamed the problems on the minorities themselves.

In the case of the Mexican-American, failure in school is usually blamed on cultural deficiencies. For example, the Mexican-American comes to school with a so-called language deficiency, with cultural deprivation, with an anti-intellectual attitude; and after school the child goes to a home that does not place too much emphasis on education anyway. As a result, when the child grows up he or she is not "qualified" to do anything but menial work and earn minimum wages. As for the political process, well, such persons are not interested in politics anyway, and even if they were, they are not "qualified" to participate. The solution offered was that as Mexican-Americans become more acculturated or assimilated their problems would disappear. In other words, the less Mexican they became, the less problems they would have.

The fact of the matter is that Mexican-Americans, as well as other minorities, are becoming more educated, more sophisticated, and better prepared. Moreover, the more aggressive activists are raising important issues within an environment of much greater sensitivity to their own culture and what it has to offer them. As a people we have learned that our culture can give us pride, identity, and self confidence. Going through educational and professional training we have learned that we do not have to give up our culture in order to learn English, to succeed in school and to perform adequately for all levels of the job market. Some minority members are now knowledgeable about the legal system, the educational process, and bureaucratic organizations to the degree that we now realize that if we were, or are, excluded, it's because someone does not want us there. The time has passed when minorities will accept without question the explanations which the

dominant society gives regarding their exclusion.

If the basic issue is exclusion, then the basic solution should be integration -- integration into the social and economic mainstream of this country. One of the more important areas of integration is the job market. Indeed the success of any minority group can be measured by the proportion of the labor force which succeeds in achieving the higher status occupations. Social change has come to the minority group; they are now demanding the opportunity to compete for, and acquire, the more prestigious, better paid jobs. Social change must now come to the dominant group; they must be willing to give minority groups the opportunity to climb the occupational and job ladder. A basic assumption of this workshop has been that if employment patterns of minorities are to be improved, changes must come about within the dominant society. Changes are needed in attitudes, value judgements, laws and degrees of ethnocentrism. In essence, a change is needed which will integrate minorities into the mainstream of American society, yet such integration does not necessarily mean absorption. Those working with minorities must not perceive their task as making minorities imitations of the dominant society. People have the right to be different; and being different does not necessarily mean that a person is inferior or incompetent or an unreliable worker. A person can learn to function in the dominant society -- as a lawyer, a plumber, or a laborer -- and still choose to keep his culture and his ethnic or racial lifestyle. In the case of the Mexican-American, the ability to speak fluent Spanish is not incompatible with the ability to speak fluent English. Agencies and their personnel should be facilitators for change while respecting differences among each minority. Furthermore, minorities must be incorporated into any planning related to change, unless those working with minorities understand the issues and concerns of minorities, and change past attitudes in dealing with minorities, little meaningful social change is likely to occur.

(These articles on Culture were written by Dr. Juan Chavira.)

UNIT 3

MEXICAN - AMERICAN FAMILY

UNIT # 3 MEXICAN AMERICAN FAMILY

DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIT: This unit presents a portrayal of the contemporary Mexican-American family.

GOALS:

1. To present information on the importance of the family within Mexican-American culture.
2. To present the Mexican-American family as heterogenous units ranging from traditional to contemporary.
3. To present the Mexican-American family as demonstrating strength through their ability to cope with high degrees of stress.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will be able to identify the various stereotypes of the Mexican-American family and be able to separate them from reality.
2. Participants will be able to identify significant values associated with Mexican-American culture and which reflect their philisophy of life and their concept of interpersonal relationships.
3. Participants will be able to define and distinguish between nuclear and extended family networks and cultural concepts related to each.

RATIONALE: Being able to recognize and accept individual values will allow those in the helping professions to identify and offer viable alternatives which are compatible with their culture. It is important to examine the characteristics and lifestyle imputed to Mexican-American families for the purpose of separating the myths from the realities.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY

by Guadalupe Gibson

The Mexican-American family has been stereotyped over the years. It has been described as poor, large, extended, patriarchate, disinterested in the education of their children, superstitious and dependent on curanderos for health care, traditionally Catholics, living in rural areas or poor urban barrios, and alingual. Early writers not only described the families stereotypically, but actually perceived the family's lifestyle as essentially pathological and maladaptive.[1] Research findings have reflected the problems of people who are impoverished, with long histories of deprivation and lack of access to adequate services. However, researchers have used an assimilationist perspective, attributing the problems to the Mexican-American culture and the families' approach to life. Currently, most writers and researchers some of whom are Mexican-Americans, are presenting the family as (1) heterogeneous, ranging from traditional to contemporary; (2) flexible, with the ability to adapt to changing circumstances; and, (3) most importantly, demonstrating strength through their ability to cope with stress which, especially for very poor families, is considerable.

Diaz-Guerrero noted that a people's culture and significant values associated with the culture are found in their day-to-day statements, which include consensual proverbs and sayings. Also, they use philosophical expressions that embody intimate views about how life should be lived, the roles that the members of the family and the society should play, the reciprocal obligations between them and the ways to deal with these obligations.[2] Mexican-Americans generally agree, as their language and behaviors attest, that the family is pivotal. Two basic values which reflect the Mexican-American's philosophy of life and their concept of interpersonal relationships are: (1) the importance of the dignity of each individual – su dignidad – personalismo and respect for all human life, and (2) the responsibility of human beings for each other or mutualism, sometimes referred to as carnalismo. These two values are intrinsically related, one supporting the other. Dignidad means dignity, but in Spanish, conceptually, it has a broader meaning than "worth". It also means self respect. Personalismo, personalism, is the philosophy which emphasizes the person or personality as the supreme value and the ultimate reality. It focuses on the inner importance of the person and centers attention on the inner qualities of the individual which constitute his uniqueness, his goodness, his worth. This form of individualism contrasts with Anglo individualism which values the person in terms of his ability to compete alone for higher social and economic status. Carnalismo means "blood relationship", as for example primo carnal, first cousin, but as used by Mexican-Americans it means hermandad, brotherhood. Ideally, the concept embraces the whole ethnic group and is intended to extend to the whole human race. This value is based on such Judeo-Christian philosophy as "ama a tu projimo como a ti mismo," "love your neighbor as yourself." It is characterized by the depth of feeling one might experience toward the closest blood relative, and subsumes loyalty and allegiance.[3] Through the interrelationship of these two values, Mexican-Americans make certain commitments to each other and have certain expectations from each other. Each individual is expected to assume some responsibility and obligation for helping other individuals, particularly his or her relatives and friends. This is extended not only to maintain their dignidad, their self-respect, but also to enhance it, and through mutualism to help others become self-actualized. This humanistic approach to interpersonal relationships constitutes the essence of family life. Within this system, parents relate to each other, to their children who are the raison d'etre for the family. Also, children relate to their parents and to each other, and the whole family relates to their close and distant relatives, including compadres, coparents, and friends. These characteristics of warmth and concern are criticized by many Anglos who see Mexican-Americans as too emotional. Mexican-Americans, in turn, see Anglos as cold, distant, and unfeeling.[4] The actual operationalization of these values is highly individualistic and the how may depend on the time, place, and circumstance in which the person finds himself or herself.

This value system is the foundation for the ascribed importance of the family to the individual. The interdependence of, and attachment to family members is referred to as familism.[5] Familism at times requires that the needs of the family collectively supersede individual needs. From the Anglo perspective, this is considered a dysfunctional characteristic, and has been relegated to the level of a negative "ism." The Anglo perspective often ignores the complexity of forces impinging on Mexican-Americans. It assumes problems they experience are inherent in their value system and presumes Mexican-Americans are culturally deficient.[6] A second characteristic of the family structure, respect for one's elders, also stems from this value system.

Obviously, Mexican-Americans are person-oriented rather than goal-oriented. This orientation has been a source of consternation to employers, teachers, business people, and social workers. They are annoyed and impatient when Mexican-American people fail to keep appointments, miss work, do not follow through. Often, Mexican-Americans may "drop everything" in response to a call for help, articulated or implied, by relatives, even distant ones, compadres, and even friends. This is most often interpreted by Anglos as the Mexican-American's desire to avoid work and

responsibility, when in reality they are reacting as very responsible people in relation to their own values. It is on the basis of this and other factors that white society claims Mexican-Americans must become acculturated "if they want to amount to anything." The resulting conflicts and dilemas, and the concomitant stress experienced by Mexican Americans when they fail to respond to the needs of others, are often contemptously disregarded by Anglos. A certain level of accomodation is achieved by most Mexican-Americans, particularly by those who have internalized middle-class values. They resort to other ways of expressing their values, primarily in a materialistic sense, such as contributing money and other goods, which in itself can be very helpful. But without the personal involvement a materialistic contribution seems to them to be an empty gesture. Some Mexican-Americans are resentful of this type of behavior on the part of their relatives or friends. In accomodating to certain situations or to changing circumstances, Mexican-Americans are not attempting to change those values which are at the heart of their culture. Rather, they are identifying other humanistic ways of expressing them in response to their fellowman's call for help. Social workers are often in a position to help Mexican-Americans identify viable alternatives which are compatible with their culture and functional in contemporary society. But they need to recognize and accept the individual's values and be able to empathize with him or her.

It is important to examine the characteristics and lifestyle imputed to Mexican-American families for the purpose of separating the myths from the realities. It is useful to do so from the "perspective that all stereotypes are based on some observable behavior of some group members."[7] By definition, a stereotype involves seeing negative values of a few members and generalizing from them to the entire group.[8]

LARGE FAMILIES

Mexican-American families do tend to be larger than the Anglo families. A 1969 survey indicated that the birth rate per 1,000 Mexican-American women aged 35 to 44 was 47 percent higher than for all women of this age.[9] According to the 1970 census, over half of the Mexican-American families have more than three children at home under 18 years of age, almost half of them have children six years old or younger, and ten percent have six or more children.[10] It is likely that the 1980 census will reflect considerably different statistics. There have been many changes in the seventies as an outcome of the civil rights movement of the sixties, including the Women's Movement. Because of inflation, higher rates of unemploment among men, and other economic pressures, and because of some attitudinal changes among Mexican-American people regarding working women, many more women are now either working or seeking employment.[11] By comparison with Anglo women, Mexican-American women are not as well represented in higher education. However, during the past 10 years, (1) more of them have been able to achieve professional education; (2) many more seem to be graduating from high school; therefore, (3) they are able to compete more successfully in the labor market.[12] Others have been busily involved in the Chicano Movement, in political activities, and in the Women's Movement.[13] As a result, a number of families are limiting their size.

Even though a large proportion of Mexican-Americans are Catholic, it appears that many are nonpracticing.[14] Also, there have been some minimal changes within the Church and some parish priests are becoming more liberal. In fact, some of these priests have been among the prime movers for political action.[15] The growing group of Mexican-American priests have been encouraging couples to seek sexual and family life education. There exists a nationwide association of priests, Padres Asociados para Derechos Religiosos, Educativos, y Sociales (PADRES), Priests Associated for Religious, Educational, and Social Rights. The members have been devoting much of their time and effort to helping Mexican-Americans improve their economic and social conditions

through education. It will be interesting to note whether or not demographic changes in family size among Mexican-Americans are reflected in the 1980 census.

EXTENDED FAMILIES

"The network of relatives that radiates from a particular nuclear family," the extended family, is still very significant to Mexican-Americans.[16] Extended families include more than two generations with grandparents, aunts and uncles, and/or other relatives living in the same household. The extended family situation is more prevalent in rural areas. In Texas rural areas particularly, the rate is somewhat higher than in other states.[17] Kinship ties continue to be viewed and valued as avenues of exchange, for communication, finances, counseling, and for moral support.[18] The function of the family, and perhaps its major strength, rests on the foundation of providing security for its members through the sharing of available goods by all.[19] It also signifies that the collective needs of the family may supersede the needs of individual members. Anglos, particularly social workers attempting to help, are bewildered by this. They often seem unable to understand how a family barely making ends meet will share what little they have with others outside the immediate family. There is a saying that encapsulates the reason behind this behavior: "Ahora por el, manana por mi," "Today for him, tomorrow for me." The expression implies: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" or "What you sow, you shall reap." None of these translations quite reflects the spirit of what is meant by the saying.

This kind of reliance on members of the immediate family, and on others farther removed, for advice and counseling has been considered by many to be pathological. Those who do rely on family members are often labeled "passive," "immature," and "dependent." It seems even worse when this strong relationship exists between a parent and a full-grown, even married, son or daughter. This label of "dependence" is often used by Anglos because this kind of inter-reliance does not fit into the concept of rugged individualism. Padilla and Ruiz caution against inputing underlying emotional conflicts or psychological problems to these behaviors, for it may very well be the most adaptive response to the person's stress. They give as an example the man who visits his mother regularly. He is not necessarily manifesting an Oedipal problem. Within his cultural framework, his behavior is appropriate as an expression of filial devotion.[20] Other Mexican-Americans may consider him disturbed if he fails to do so, if that is customary in his milieu. This illustrates how "mental health" is culturally defined. A person who behaves appropriately within the cultural norm is considered well-adjusted and mentally healthy by the members of that group. This is an important fact that needs to be kept in mind by those working with Mexican-Americans.

The family with its extended networks may be the only place of refuge for the individual, providing emotional, and at times, material support.[21] It is sustaining and supportive, helping individual members to achieve goals which otherwise would be impossible.[22] Given that so many Mexican-Americans are poor or impoverished and live in a threatening world or squalor and hardship, this mutual support system may well be their "saving grace."[23] Some of these cultural patterns have obviously evolved in response to historical conditions of economic deprivation and exclusion from the greater society.

The system of compadrazgo, co-parenthood, fits into the extended family network also. Compadrazgo refers to the institution of compadres – compadre, cofather, comadre, comother. This system reflects the influence of Spain. Sponsors at baptism become padrinos – padrino, godfather, madrina, godmother – godparents of the child and compadres of the child's parents. This establishes a spiritual bond between them which becomes almost as strong as a blood relationship. This institution dates back to the middle ages when life expectancy was short. The baptismal godparents assumed the obligation to supervise the child's spiritual development and religious

training in the event of the parents' demise. If necessary, they were expected to assume financial support of the child also, including taking the child into their home and raising him or her as their own. This sense of responsibility on the part of their compadres was reassuring to parents who feared for the welfare of their children, were they to die prematurely. Godparents or sponsors at other sacramental rituals, confirmation, and first communion, were next in line for assuming responsibility for their godchildren. Their responsiblity for the welfare, corporal and spiritual, of the godchildren has always been taken seriously. At weddings, the best man and the matron or maid of honor become padrinos, godparents, to the bride and groom. Some couples may have a segundo (a second) padrino and madrina, but this is mostly to confer an honor on good friends. These padrinos are expected to help young couples if they need economic assistance or advice and counseling. This also stems from the fact that young marrying couples were often orphans and needed someone "que les diera la mano," "who would lend a hand."

The literature reflects that the nuclear family is becoming more prevalent among Mexican-Americans; the extended family is slowly disappearing except in some rural areas. It is also believed that, as Mexican-Americans improve their socioeconomic status, they see the strong familistic orientation as an obstacle to advancement rather than a help. There are some people who have felt "ensnared" by the family network, and that the ties which hold a family together under stressful conditions can be experienced as fetters by some of the family members. Also, some upwardly mobile single people and couples relinquish the family ties to make it on their own. If they do not receive, they may not be expected to give. On the other hand, there are some individuals who experience emotional problems and desperately cling to the family. This makes some members feel that the only way they can survive is for them to sever the ties or at least "loosen" them. It is the author's opinion, nonetheless, based on both personal and professional experiences, that the extended family as a psychological concept continues to be valued, and the emotional networks continue to exist. Only the behavioral expression of the values are being modified. Rapid changes in society and the concentration of Mexican-Americans in urban areas — 85 percent according to the 1970 census — have brought about these differences.[24] Urban living does not facilitate living together as one household, or even contiguously. It is not always possible to have relatives even in the same city, but one can still feel near them. Now there exists ready, fast transportation, almost everyone has a car, and there is the telephone to facilitate contact. People have to adapt to new environments and new circumstances, but basic values do not always have to change. Modification in the behavioral expression of the values may be sufficient for life in the new situations.

Mexican-American culture, as all cultures, is dynamic. It is in a constant state of flux. Internal cultural changes and external environmental changes are beyond the control of the cultural group. Even the process of maturation — groups and societies mature, too — call for modifications. And these modifications must occur at times "not only superficially, but also fundamentally in the core of values and primary beliefs which may not only be outmoded but may actually be deleterious to the group."[25] Mexican-Americans have been adapting and accomodating for generations: from the Indo-Spanic, to the Mexican, to the Mexican-American culture. Their basically unchanged humanistic values have contributed to their survival as an ethnic group.

PATRIARCHAL

The "typical" or traditional family is described as patriarchal. It includes an authoritarian father and a submissive mother, both of whom accept the doctrine of male superiority. Child-rearing practices include indulgent affection and harsh punishment,[26] and the father is seen as the "absolute ruler" of the family with full authority over his wife and children. When

he delegates authority, it is usually through the male line with the wife assuming responsibility for seeing that his authority and decisions are carried out and respected. The concepts of machismo, hembrismo, and marianismo form part of the concept of male dominance. The stereotypic view of machismo as exaggerated masculinity persists. Negatively, the term connotes a latent capacity for violence and sensitivity to insult or affront. Inherent in machismo is a tendency to manifest male superiority and dominance through many sexual conquests and ultimately through the domination of his wife and children.[27] This interpretation of the concept overlooks the Mexican-American perspective of it as a positive concept, encompassing those male behaviors which assert masculinity. Machismo moves a man to be responsible, to act with dignity, and to provide leadership for his family. This enables him to carry on against all odds whether in the battlefields, in employment lines, or fighting for survival in the barrio.[28] Every man, whether white, brown, red, black, or yellow, innately needs to assert his masculinity and to feel respected by his family and his peers. Most important for Mexican-American males is to have self-respect. Unfortunately, Mexican-American men live in an oppressive and discriminatory society which does not always give them the opportunity to affirm themselves positively through their jobs and lifestyles. They are constantly subjugated to indignities, to insults, and at times, are almost dehumanized.[29] In their importance, it seems that the only avenue open to them to be assertive is through the subjugation of their wives and children. There is no other identifiable way for some of them to feel like men in control of their destinies. Their wives, sensitive to their needs, accomodate this situation, and often manage to keep the family functioning.

The concept of hembrismo, exaggerated femaleness or feminity, is the corollary of the concept of machismo. It has both positive and negative aspects. A wife often develops a self-concept that is diametrically opposed to that of her husband's. If he asserts his machismo in a positive way, she, too, will assert her hembrismo positively. She will, therefore, have a positive self-concept. By the same token, the wife of an angry, self-doubting macho may be passive, masochistic, and self-effacing. Marianismo, the third concept, promotes the view of women as being saintly, long-suffering, pure, reflecting the image of la Virgen Maria, the Virgin Mary. Some women accept this as their self-image and enjoy playing the role of martyr. They build their self-concept on this premise, gaining self-respect from the sympathy and/or praise they attract from friends and relatives. This becomes their way of coping with what otherwise would be an intolerable situation.

In a traditional family, male and female roles are clearly defined. The home is child-centered and the parents tend to indulge them, but they are expected to be respectul and obedient. Children are assigned chores very early in their development. The responsibilities assigned are real and necessary. Children feel they are contributing members of the family and develop the sense of interdependence.[30] They are socialized early into the roles they will fulfill as adults. The female child is given less freedom than her brothers, and begins to learn the mother role by helping with household chores and caring for younger brothers and sisters. As an adolescent, she is chaperoned and "protected" from suitors, and by the time she marries, she is ready to assume her role as wife and mother.[31] The young male is expected to run errands and do some of the heavier chores. As he gets older, he learns to protect his sisters and how to think and act like a man. In adolescence, the differences in the male-female behavior becomes more marked. The girls are expected to remain close to home, while the boys have freedom to roam in the community.

In speaking about Mexican-American families, traditional or non-traditional, it must be understood that Mexican-American families are heterogeneous. Any generalizations about them must be made with caution. It is also important to note that the "traditional" family if not inferior to the contemporary one. There are well-functioning compatible families, as well as dysfunctional ones. This occurs regardless of where the family falls on the continuum from traditional to modern. There is no "ideal type" of family.

It is also essential to emphasize that some of the traits imputed to Mexican-American families are socioeconomically determined by their condition of poverty. Poor people have few options. Since such a large proportion of Mexican-Americans are poor, it is important to keep this in mind. Many poor Mexican-Americans are poor, it is important to keep this in mind. Many poor Mexican-American families do manage very well, nonetheless, and are mentally healthy. They reflect the many strengths and coping mechanisms inherent in the Mexican-American culture and values system. One word of caution is necessary. It is important not to ignore the well-adjusted poor families as service providers. Socioeconomic conditions should be improved for them, too.

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UNIT 4

TRADITIONAL MEDICAL APPROACHES

UNIT # 4 TRADITIONAL MEDICAL PRACTICES

DESCRIPTION OF UNIT:

This unit presents a summary of traditional approaches to the practice of medicine which are found in many Mexican-American communities.

GOALS:

1. To present information on the existence of folk beliefs and the use of folk medicine among Mexican-American people.

2. To present information on folk medicine as a resource for those for whom health services are not readily available, either geographically, psychologically, or both.

3. To present information on "folk medicine" as current, viable, effective and in use by many cultures.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will be able to recognize and define "folk medicine" or curanderismo.

2. Participants will be able to identify the various medical resources available to Mexican-Americans in the barrios and in rural areas.

3. Participants will be able to recognize some of the most prevalent folk diseases in the Mexican-American barrios.

4. Participants will be able to identify some of the cures for the various folk diseases.

RATIONALE: There is a great deal that can be learned from the substance and practice of folk medicine. Folk medicine is a culturally relevant force with regard to interaction within the migrant farmworker community. It is an important link between the migrants and service providers. They are a vital asset to the problem of child abuse and neglect because they work within the family.

CONTENTS:

I. Traditional Approaches to Medicine

- A. Home Remedies
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- C. Herbalists
- D. Farmaceuticos
- E. Curanderos
- F. Sobaderos
- G. Adivinadores
- H. Brujos
- I. Folk Diseases

TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO MEDICINE

by Guadalupe Gibson

The issue of health care delivery that impinge upon the underserved and the needy, and particularly Mexican-Americans, have been critical for a long time. Morbidity rates, lowered life expectancy, infant mortality rates, even malnutrition bordering on starvation for some children have been documented. One of the main areas of dispute between Mexican Americans and the providers of health and welfare services has involved the scientific versus the traditional approaches to the practice of medicine. Many writers, such as Kiev, have commented on the prevalence of folk beliefs and the use of folk medicine among Mexican-American people. These people have depended heavily, if not exclusively, on the services of curanderos. Some of the researchers have used limited samples in their studies. They have pointed to the quaintness of these practices, seeing them as those of a backward, superstitous people. Kiev ascribed these practices to their neurotic needs.[1] None of the studies considered that most of their subjects have had limited access to adequate services. Other writers such as Martinez and Martin[2], have presented these cultural practices of Mexican-American subgroups in a positive light. Reflecting the natural wisdom of people regarding medical care, curanderismo is a resource for those for whom health services are not readily available, either geographically, psychologically, or both. Genill noted that folk medicine, or medicine of the people, lies both within and outside the field of scientific medicine. He added that "folk medicine" is often associated with bizarre and useless health practices of primitive or uneducated people. But he allows that it is current, viable, effective, and in use by many cultures – if not all – including our own.[3] A few studies, some of which have otherwise presented Mexican-Americans stereotypically, have indicated that some Mexican-Americans prefer to use regular medical services when available and provided in a culturally and linguistically syntonic manner. To the Mexican-American, this means that health personnel, degreed and nondegreed, speak their language and are aware of their beliefs and attitudes toward health and illness. It also means that personnel will respect these beliefs, help them to acquire new knowledge, and assist them to integrate new ideas with old. In other words, if racism, prejudice, and discrimination are eliminated from health care delivery, administration, and planning, Mexican Americans will use health services. They want to use such services. Even Madsen, one of the ethnocentric researchers and a severe critic of Mexican-American values and lifestyles, noted this. He said that, in spite of "their objection to modern medicine and the high cost of medical care", parents were conscientious about taking their children to the doctor when serious illness was suspected.

There are a number of resources available to Mexican-Americans in the barrios and in rural area. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into detail about them, but some of these resources and the most common folk diseases will be briefly described.

HOME REMEDIES

These are adminstered by members of the family, often a grandmother or an aunt, who has become skilled at diagnosing and differentiating serious conditions from those that can be treated at home. The intent is to make the patient comfortable while the illness runs its course. Remedies include teas, poultices, oils, ventosas (the use of a cupping glass to draw air), and sobadas (special forms of massages). Some religious rituals may accompany some of these treatments. Many families grow the better-known herbs.

NEIGHBORS

People in the neighborhood, though not curanderos(as), have developed skills in healing and are willing to help. They usually do not charge for services. Remedies are similar to those used in the home.

HIERBERO(A), HERBALIST

This is an individual who knows a great deal about herbs, bark of trees, and roots. The patient, or a member of the family, goes to him or her, describes the symptoms, and she or he prescribes for the patient herbs, roots, or whatever is appropriate to be used as teas or poultices. He or she ordinarily charges a small fee for services and sells the herbs.

FARMACEUTICOS(AS) O BOTICARIOS(AS), PHARMACISTS OR DRUGGISTS

People consult pharmacists or druggists for help in identifying patient medicines for such maladies as colds, the flu, skin conditions, and others. They do not charge for service ordinarily; they just sell the medicines. Some of them are very conscientious about insisting that their customers go to the doctor if they suspect serious illness.

CURANDEROS OR CURANDERAS, HEALERS

Curandero, curandera for females, literally means "healer" or "curer". It is applied to people who have special knowledge and skills to treat folk diseases using herbs and other remedies. The knowledge is based on old Spanish and Indian medical practices and on empirical experience. It is believed that curanderos are endowed by God with the gift of healing. Curanderismo, the practice, has religious overtures. Curanderos establish credibility in the community for the successes they have had. Some of them are highly skilled and widely known. There are some who have become famous. They prescribe similar herb teas, unguents and other remedies as those used in the home by relatives or neighbors. The diagnostic and the treatment procedures involve rituals, saying prayers, laying on of hands, use of holy water, and votive candles. These diagnostic and treatment skills are what distinguish them from the others. They consider their skills and ability as a don de Dios, a gift from God, which they attempt to develop fully and use responsibility para el bien de la humanidad, to help humankind. They are sometimes consulted to remove bewitchments – spells or hexes. Many refuse to have anything to do with brujeria, bewitchment or black magic, and evil powers. A few believe that their powers are stronger than the evil powers of the brujo(a) who cast the spell, and proceed to treat such patients. Curanderos(as) do not charge for their services but accept whatever the patient is able to offer.

It is important to note that curanderos(as) will treat patients who have emotional or mental problems. The curanderos are very sensitive and usually have developed wisdom about psychology and the human condition. Part of the treatment often includes giving advice or counseling. Because of their keen perceptions and the knowledge about stresses, Mexican-Americans are subjected to, they are able to make accurate diagnosis, and are successful in their treatment. Although many of them have learned to identify serious and even chronic emotional problems, they deliberately deal only with the "here and now situation". The majority of them are conscientious and wise and refer the seriously ill and disturbed to physicians. Dr. George Myers, in an article in a recent issue of Psychiatric Annals devoted to issues of Hispanics, suggests that physicians can learn a great deal from curanderos about the treatment of Mexican-American people.[5]

Sobador(a), Masseur or Masseuse

The sobadores, although they do massage and manipulate, are considered somewhat different from masseur or masseuse. They are supposed to have particular skills to treat sprains and to treat other diseases, such as empacho. Although some curanderos(as) do sobadas, too, the sobadores usually specialize in massage and may work together with others. Some have skills similar to those of chiropractors.

Other "resources" that some Mexican-Americans use that fall in the realm of "superstition" from an Anglo perspective are:

Adivinadores(as), Readers

The readers may be phrenologists, palm readers, crystal ball gazers and readers, and so forth. Some of them use apparent religious rituals prior to, during, or following the readings. People use adivinadores(as) not only to tell them their fortune, but also to find out about the fate or destiny of others, spouses, relatives, or friends. Although this is done sometimes with bad intentions, usually it is done for the purpose of helping a relative or friend. Some readers are consulted for medical purposes. Through their readings, they give health care advice, include some religious rituals, and create an air of mysticism. Some are obviously charlatans, but others are quite serious. They believe theirs, too, is a don de Dios, gift from God, and may practice religious rituals as well. Some readers have established fees, but many accept whatever their customers are able to pay.

Brujos(as), Witches

These are people who practice black magic usually to do harm. Some people ask them to cast embrujos, bewitchments, spells, or hexes on others whom they wish to harm, to dominate, or to control. They are also consulted to remove spells or hexes. A person who is bewitched or hexed may have to search for the brujo(a) who bewitched him or her to cast out the spell or remove the hex, as others may not be strong enough to do so. Some brujos(as) are said to have standard fees for different kinds of hexes or spells. Others are said to accept whatever the customer can pay. The brujos(as) are as oridinary people, undistinguishable from those around them, not like the fairy tale witches. Some of them may appear somewhat eccentric in their dress or manner, but most do not. Their abilities become known by word of mouth.

A bewitchment, a spell, or a hex is usually referred to as mal puesto, imposed illness or imposed evil.

Folk Diseases

Some of the most prevalent folk diseases, those for which some Mexican-American people believe doctors do not prescribe, include the following:

Empacho – This is usually translated as surfeit or indigestion. The former means "over-eating". This is a different concept from empacho which is described as an obstruction of the intestines; that is, a wad or mass of undigested or undigestible food adheres to the lining of the intestine and causes pain and discomfort. The patient also suffers from lack of appetite. The meaning of indigestion is closer, conceptually, yet not identical to empacho. In addition to some medicaments, sobadas, manipulations or massages, usually at the small of the back, are recommended. Mexican-Americans believe that doctors do not know how to treat this condition because they treat it as ordinary indigestion. They do not indicate appropriately or manipulate or rub, to bring about the

dislodgement of the mass. Purgatives and enemas do not accomplish this. Experts know when treatment is successful because they can identify the dislodged empacho in the excrement of the patient, which they examine routinely. Empacho pasado means chronic empacho, and requires longer treatment.

Susto – This refers to fright, terror, scare. Susto has some of the components of "shock", yet is different. This may result from any kind of frightening experience. Children are very susceptible, and parents attempt to protect them from becoming frightened. Some parents claim that particularly timid children are frightened by teachers and other school personnel when they fear not only physical punishment but being embarassed in front of others as well. When a person is asustado, frightened or scared, it is believed that there is an imbalance between the body and the spirit. If the depression that usually accompanies this malady is very severe, the soul is assumed to have "left the body" and be "wandering" around the area where the fright occured. If the spot where it happened can be identified, the patient is taken there and is put through a ritual by whoever is treating him or her, which includes calling the name of the person saying, "vente Juan, no te quedes. Come, Juan (or whatever the name), don't remain here". Herb teas are usually prescribed along with the rituals.

Susto pasado refers to chronic fright and requires long and more complicated treatment.

Espanto – This also means shock or terror, which is believed to be stronger than susto. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with susto. People usually refer to espanto when the person has been frightened or terrorized by a ghost or an apparition, or has heard voices. The problems of hearing voices and seeing apparitions are usually diagnosed by Anglo doctors as symptoms of psychosis. Mexican-Americans who complain of these problems, if diagnosed within the framework of the culture, are found to be sane. A ghost is often referred to as an espanto. The approach to treatment of espanto is similar to that of susto, except that it may also include prayers for the soul of the ghost or apparition to enable his or her spirit to rest in peace. It is assumed that the apparition is brought about by a sould trying to communicate with the patient or seeking help to enter heaven. Or it may sometimes be a relative trying to communicate for other reasons with the patient, such as warning him or her of dangers or asking for forgiveness. On occasions, a priest may be invited to help.

Mal de Ojo -- Sometimes called mal ojo or evil eye, which is incorrect conceptually. Mal can be translated both as "evil" or "illness". It is the latter that is referred to in mal de ojo, illness caused by the eye. This condition is usually brought about inadvertantly by a person who by nature has ojo or vista fuerte, "strong eye or sight". This condition can transmit "currents" when that person admires another person or thing. He or she may not necessarily covet the article or envy the person, it just "happens" unintentionally. These currents are believed to be broken when the person having the "strong eye" touches the person or thing admired. Parents often ask people who admire their children or say something complimentary about them to touch them. Social workers are often asked to do this.

Mal ojo refers to "evil eye" and is used by brujos(as) or those who know they have the "strong eye" and use it to bring harm to others or the possessions of others. This is in the realm of mal puesto or "imposed illness" described under folk diseases.

Mal de Ojo is very prevalent though not exclusive among children. The youngsters look pretty and attractive when they are dressed up or look cute doing their antics, and someone les hace ojo. Literally translated this means "make the eye" or "cast the eye". The child becomes ill. He or she may become feverish, vomit, and/or have diarrhea. The simplest way to treat this is to identify the culprit and have him or her touch the child and participate in the curing ritual. Mexican-American people who believe that they have "strong sight" usually know when they have "cast the eye"

because they develop a headache. If it does not go away with aspirin, the person suspects que hizo ojo. This means he or she "cast the eye". It is necessary, then, for the person to try to recollect the events of the day. If the person remembers the incident that may have resulted in mal de ojo, he or she tries to locate the child or adult whose illness resulted and get involved in the treatment. Often, it is a neighbor or friend. For example, if a young lady's hair is admired, it may lose it's luster or curl, or even all fall out, never to be the same again.

When an object is admired, it may be broken, lost or affected in other ways. The culprit more than likely will not experience any symptoms. When a person loses, tears, or breaks a possession, he or she may react by saying someone le hizo ojo. This is criticized by some Anglos as another indication of the person being irresponsible.

Caida de mollera, fallen fontanel – The soft spot on a baby's head becomes depressed, and it is said to be fallen or dropped. This is thought to be caused by jerking the baby suddenly by pulling the nipple quickly and strongly out of the baby's mouth, by moving him up or down rapidly, or by a blow to the head. The infant becomes fretful and is unable to suckle. It is believed that when the fontanel drops, it affects the soft palate. The usual treatment includes inserting the thumb or two fingers into the baby's mouth and pressing or pushing the palate up. Sometimes this is done while holding the baby upside-down. This should be done only by persons who know what they are doing, otherwise the baby could be hurt.

Mal Puesto, put on or imposed illness – This is an illness or condition caused by a hex or a spell cast by a brujo or a bruja as described above. This is done through the use of black magic, voodoo, and other forms of witchery. When a person becomes ill suddenly or develops an inexplicable condition, a mal puesto is usually suspected by the person and family as the illness. Usually a curandera(a) is consulted first, who may or may not readily identify the condition as a hex. If normal treatment does not work, and the curandero(a) does not suspect a serious illness, a diagnosis of mal puesto might be made. Most curanderos(as) refuse to treat these conditions and usually recommend that the patient and his or her family consult a brujo(a), preferably the one who is responsible for the hex. A few curanderos(as) have faith that their power for good is stronger than the evil powers of the brujo(a), and will treat mal puesto, sometimes successfully.

There are other conditions not as popular such as ictericia, usually called atiricia or tiricia. It is a malfunction of the bile. One of the symptoms is severe depression prevalent among children, and is usually related to being, or believing to be, abandoned or left behind as when a parent, relative, or close friend dies or moves away. Another one is bilis desparramados, spilled or overflowed bile. This is sometimes believed to be a symptom of susto. Lethargy, lack of appetite, and jaundice are some of the symptoms. The person becomes very ill upon eating eggs or drinking milk.

Many Mexican-American people, particularly the elderly or some more recent immigrants, believe in humoral diseases and the problems caused by hot and cold foods or light and heavy foods. They also believe in cojer aire, "taking air", particularly at night or when sleeping in a draft.

There are other beliefs evolved through years of experience that have deep meaning to many Mexican-Americans. Scientists and medical personnel are beginning to recognize the natural wisdom if people and to respect these beliefs. Herbs, oils, and other remedies that may be used in treatments have often been found to be medically sound. Some countries, such as the People's Republic of China, have skillfully integrated traditional medicine with scientific medicine with outstanding results.

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UNIT 5

SITUATIONS AFFECTING MIGRANT FAMILIES

UNIT # 5 SITUATIONS AFFECTING MIGRANT FAMILIES

DESCRIPTION OF UNIT

This unit describes situational factors affecting migrant families due in large part to environmental conditions found in their lifestyle and that as such may lead to child neglect.

GOALS:

1. To present a working definition of "situational" neglect as it relates to migrant family situations, living conditions and economic status.
2. To present a summary of migrant family situations with focus primarily on structure, interaction and degree of social isolation.
3. To present factors in the living conditions of migrant families such as housing, geographic location, nutrition and health status.
4. To present information on the economic status of migrants in terms of employment status and income level.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will be able to define situational neglect and how it relates to the migrant lifestyle.
2. Participants will be able to identify various situations that affect migrant families.
3. Participants will be able to relate situational neglect to migrant family situations.
4. Participants will be able to analyze how factors can result in situational neglect.

RATIONALE:

Migrant families, because of the unique characteristics of their lifestyle, are considered a "high risk" group in terms of child abuse and neglect. More awareness of these factors and how they are interrelated is an essential part of the training for those working with these families.

CONTENTS:

SITUATIONS AFFECTING MIGRANT FAMILIES

I. Family Situations

- A. Structure
- B. Family Interaction
- C. Social Isolation

II. Living Conditions

- A. Housing
- B. Geographic Location
- C. Nutrition
- D. Health Status

III. Economic Status

- A. Employment Status
- B. Income Level

SITUATIONS AFFECTING MIGRANT FAMILIES

There are many different perceptions of the problem of child abuse and neglect. Consequently, there are many definitions, each one constructed for the practical use for which it was formulated. Generally, child abuse and neglect has been defined as physical or psychological harm to the child as a result of acts of violence or inadequate support of the child in health, nutrition, clothing, shelter, or emotional care.[1] Due to their low socio-economic status and the nature of their livelihood, Mexican-American migrants, adults as well as children, suffer from inadequate access to care in these areas. Migrant children living in this environment suffer from what may be called a "situational" neglect. This type of neglect, while not deliberate may, nonetheless, have serious effects on the child.[2]

Situational factors are defined as the complex of factors unique to an individual and to families at a given time that arise from the immediate familial, living space, and social and economic environment. They can be positive factors strengthening the family and improving the quality of family life, or negative ones, making life more difficult.[3] Situational factors related to child abuse and neglect are divided into three major groups: the family situation, living conditions, and economic status.

THE FAMILY SITUATION

The family situation will focus on its structure; family interaction; and the degree of social isolation of migrant families.

Children and the family are highly valued in Mexican culture. In addition, numerous ties with other relatives are established and continually reinforced through frequent interaction. Children traditionally have been very important in Hispanic society because their labor has been essential to the economic well-being of the family. Until recently most Hispanic families derived their livings from family-oriented agricultural enterprises. This agrarian economic base required the labor of many children for a family's economic position to improve, and without an institutionalized system of social security children were required to support aging family members. In addition, since mortality rates were extremely high, numerous children were procreated in order to assure the survival of at least a few.[7]

Although many families of Mexican decent have recently joined the migration to urban centers, the traditional family orientation remains strong and large numbers of children are still prized. Like other immigrant groups in the United States; however, the burden of a large family in an urbanized setting will no doubt soon be felt and a commensurate decline in fertility will probably be the last group to adapt to the new environment.[8]

There are those who argue that certain characteristics in the Mexican-American migrant culture makes them less likely to suffer from problems of child abuse and neglect. In particular, the extended family, characteristic of much of the migrant culture, is a built-in support system for family members. The family is usually very close and interested in the welfare of its members. The migrant community itself is often a close-knit society with supportive friends and neighbors. This family structure and close community relationships may certainly have a positive effect on the incidence of child abuse and neglect.[9] Before any judgements can be made about this correlation, much more needs to be known about the Mexican-American extended family structure and functions.

The large number of migrant families that go up north to work entails disruption of living patterns for both adults and children. Children are taken out of their home schools and forced to abandon their studies for the remainder of the school year. Many times the parents do not register

the children in local schools because of the lateness in the school year. Wives also experience disruptions as they leave old friends and close relatives, to struggle with new facilities and encounter different way of doing things. They must find new stores, for example, which may not carry the foods and products they are accustomed to cooking for their families.[10] This, in combination with the large family size characteristic of Mexican-American society, places additional demand upon the woman. An added factor is that when migrants are engaged in agricultural labor, the added work load compounds the domestic demands placed upon migrant women.[11]

Adequate child care is a pressing need of the migrant family. When migrants travel with their families, it is essential that most adult members work to provide the family with necessities. Parents usually do not have the option of staying home to care for their children. The income earned by older children is often needed, too, so in many cases no one can be spared to care for young children. When day care programs are unavailable or inaccessible, children accompany their parents to the fields. Under the best of circusmtances, when the weather is good, infants and children are inevitably exposed to plant pesticides, are left to crawl or play in the dirt, and are deprived of attention, supervision, and care.[12]

Migrant farmworkers, by the very nature of their work, cannot "belong" to the community where they work every summer. The long hours of labor tend to widen the separation between the townsfolk and the workers. The fact that the migrant family is subject to constant mobility and uncertainty about a job, or lack of it, may increase the isolation and alienation of the migrant family.[13] Furthermore, the communities to which farmworkers migrate are rural, small, and supported primarily by agriculture. Such communities are traditionally conservative and tend to be relatively more socially and ethnically homogeneous than larger population centers that have a greater occupational mix and a more diverse economy.[14] As a result the general views held by the communities impedes migrant participation.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Living conditions are defined by factors such as housing and geographic location, nutrition, and health status of Mexican-American migrant families.

It is very difficult to give a general summary of housing and sanitary conditions of migrant workers in a few statements because conditions vary greatly from place to place. There are certain features, however, that migrant housing have in common. In most cases housing is inadequate to accomodate large families, is unsanitary, and lacks the essentials for a decent living environment. Typically, housing units consist of one small room per family, regardless of family size, with no electricity or plumbing. Communal bathroom and cooking facilities are frequently found. Holes in the roof, windows, and walls are not uncommon, and many units have only dirt floors. Often, there are not enough beds for family members to sleep confortably, and floor space is inadequate to accomodate a sufficient number of beds. This unsanitary, crowded environment contributes to disease and health problems which are aggravated by, if not a direct result of, these deplorable conditions. The serious consequences of poor environmental conditions are magnified for the large number of migrant families left without any shelter, now common in many regions.[15]

Upon arrival in many areas, large numbers of migrants must look elsewhere for shelter. Migrant camp housing has never been plentiful, and the migrant families often use camps that require an entire family to live in only one room. Moreover, during peak seasons, the number of persons per unit may be much higher. A study by the Kansas Department of Economic Development conducted during peak season found a mean household size 7.8, including those sleeping outdoors or in cars and trucks, and using the bathrooms and cooking facilities of a unit. The number of persons per household ranges from one to 65; seven percent of households had more than 24 persons.[16] A

study done in South Carolina in 1971 corraborates this data. In that study, 91 out of 366 migrants interviewd, 25 percent were living in housing units that contained eight or more families.[17] In addition to overcrowding, another study found that 79 percent of the migrant camp housing had one room per family, 61 percent had no sanitary facilities, and 62 percent had dirt floors.[18] A 1974 study of migrant camps in Indiana also presented evidence regarding the quality of migrant housing. Some of the violations found included occupants forced to open sliding metal doors to get ventilation, disconnected urinals, large holes in floors, ceilings, and walls, water sources located in the middle of the whole camp, and trash scattered throughout the camp.[19]

The nutritional status of migrants is considered poor, with limited availability to grocery stores as labor camps are usually located far from town. If a company store is available, it usually sells goods at high prices; often the nearest rural store is far away and expensive. The migrant camp might not have a refrigerator in good working condition little food storage space or protection from vermin are conditions which do not lend themselves to economical nutritious buying practices for the family. Bulk wholesale buying is impossible, and milk and fresh foods cannot be kept long. Or, if kept for short periods, repeated runs are necessary to resupply the whole family. Single individuals and families in crews are often charged high proces for foods prepared for them by the crew leaders or companies. Members of these crew families have been known to live solely off their own workfield crops.[20]

Farm worker children have an infant mortality rate of 63 to 1,000 live births, compared to a national rate of 20 per 1,000 live births. Prenatal mortality, as reflected in a California study, is also abnormally high — 28 percent for Spanish farm workers, compared to a rate of 19 percent for white professional, administrative, and technical workers. One illness in the California study exemplifies the high death rate of farm worker children. It was caused by diarrhea, presumably preventable. The study showed "that farm workers' children have seven times the expected mortality" in this category when compared with the national average.[21]

Farm worker's basic health is way below average, when compared with national figures. Migrant births occur outside of hospitals at nine times the national rate. Hospitalization of farm workers for accidents is 50 percent higher than the national rate.[22] The average life span of the farm worker is 49 years, which is 20 years below the national average. The death rate from influenza and pneumonia is 200 percent higher than the national rate. Mortality rates for tuberculosis and other infectious diseases among migrants are two and one-half times the national rate.[23] Another study of 300 Mexican-American pre-school children of farm workers indicated that 55 percent were found to have Vitamin A deficiency and 36 percent showed evidence of reduced food intake. Other findings were decreased height attainment, decreased weight, decreased head circumference, liver enlargement, and a decreased serum protein.[24]

Diseases which are considered practically nonexistent by the National population are present among farm workers. For example, in Congressional testimony, Raymond M. Wheeler stated, "we saw rickets, a disorder thought to be nearly abolished in this country." According to the testimony of Gordon Harper, M.D." . . . this very month, July 1970, when the rest of the country has been congratulating itself on the fact that no one died last year from poliomyelitis, the most serious of the enteric viral infections, three deaths from polio have occurred in South Texas."[25]

Mexican-American migrants often experience a certain cultural isolation heightened by the language barrier. Folk medicine has frequently been practiced in their culture.[26] Curanderos, or folk healers, are still widely used. Home remedies and root medicines are often more trusted than standard medical practices.[27] Culturally, they are more sensitive to exposing their bodies during a physical examination, especially if the physican is of the opposite sex.[28] Persons providing health care need to be particularly empathetic to such cultural differences.

For example, "mal de ojo" is one popular folk medical belief in the Mexican-American migrant

community. "Mal de ojo", literally translates as "evil eye", is believed to be a result of excessive admiration or desire on the part of another person.[29] An understanding of the belief system asociated with "mal de ojo" is important in examining certain client behaviors. For example, it is not unusual for Mexican-American mothers to isolate their children for fear of having one of them become a victim of "mal de ojo". Children are especially kept from public arenas such as department stores and buses. Mothers resorting to such type of protection of their children do so out of a strong belief in the power of "mal de ojo". They are said to be waiting for the child(ren) to mature and as such, be strong enough to resist falling ill from the admiration shown by others. Caution ought to be taken from diagnosing such parental protection of children as "withdrawal" or "paranoia."[30]

Magico – religious and atoning ritualistic practices are another aspect of folk beliefs by which Mexican-Americans deal with illness or misfortune. The practices include, (1) promise-making, (2) visiting shrines, (3) offering medals and candles, and (4) offering prayers. They are directed to God, His Saints, and sometimes curanderos."[31] Consequently, a helping practioner would do well to remember that these practices are coping mechanisms often utilized in times of discomfort and problems. Rather than asking a traditionally-oriented client to take responsibility for his or her actions, an alternative intervention might to to assist the client in fulfilling his/her prescription for folk medicine cures and/or rituals.[32]

ECONOMIC STATUS

Economic status includes employment status and income level of migrants.

Migrant farmworker labor is crucial to the agricultural productivity of the United States, and consequently affects U.S. economy and the world distribution of food. Not only are a large number of farms dependent upon manual labor for harvesting, but in addition, the success of many processing plants and canneries is dependent upon migrant labor. Estimates on the number of migrant workers range from 600,000 to 1.3 million, and many of these workers have families containing four to seven children.[33] Migrant laborers are a large force contributing to the U.S. economy, but receiving few or virtually none of the benefits.

The migrant farmworker's livelihood is typified by a recurrent set of conditions. Continual travel is necessitated by the nature of the growing seasons, harvesting periods, and the social organization of crews, migrants and growers. Often migrants have insufficient funds and lack sufficient foods. Often too, they must pay crew leaders a percentage of their meager earnings for transportation, food, and other goods and services. The work that migrants perform is the third most dangerous type of occupation in America; and they do it without compensation insurance, they are at the mercy of the weather and they have no unemployment insurance. Migrant workers also have a minimum wage that when it is enforced, is lower than that of other workers. Consequently, both parents usually work since they cannot affort to do so otherwise. Their children also come to the fields and often the smaller children begin working voluntarily, while the older children feel obligated and must work.[34]

The problem of child labor has been eliminated in all occupations except agriculture. Historically, farmworkers have been exempt from much of the federal protection given in other occupations. Even though agriculture has the third highest occupationl fatality rate, child labor provisions are not so stringent for agricultural as for non-agricultural sectors.

For example, federal child labor laws allow children aged 14 and over to work in agriculture. In many cases, children aged 12 can work with parental consent.[35] The enforcement of these minimal laws can be difficult. Law enforcement officials must visit the fields and observe children working. This is rarely done. Also, school truant officers rarely "bother" to insure the attendance

of migrant children. As a result, the education, health, and development of working migrant children is impaired.

Child labor is often an economic necessity for the migrant family. Indeed, many people agree that family welfare is better served if every able member works to enhance earnings. While child labor contributes minimally to the growers production, every extra dollar earned by the children is essential to the family's needs. Unless there is a program such as work/study which provides an economic incentive to stay in school, children are forced to drop out by the time they reach high school.

Many children who are too young to work may spend their days in or near the fields where their parents are working. These infants and toddlers are frequently cared for by older children. This arrangements provide only minimal care for the children and prevents the older sibblings from attending school. No law prohibits presence of young children in the work areas. As a result, many pre-schoolers, especially infants, are exposed to hazardous conditions. These hazards are numerous and, in many cases, have had serious consequences.

Exposure to pesticides which are used in the fields has been a major problem to all family members. Migrant health clinics report that skin infections and upper respiratory problems are common in the migrant population as a result of pesticides. However, funding and time constraints prevent the clinics from determining the extent of pesticides abuse. Therefore, the actual incidence of ill effects from pesticides in the fields is difficult to determine. Since migrants move so frequently, it is often impossible to determine the source of pesticides exposure and to insure adequate treatment for the victims. Many young children are directly exposed to pesticides in the fields as well as indirectly through the residue brought home on the clothes of family members who are then in contact with their children.

In addition to the dangers of pesticides exposure, farm machinery has also been found to be a hazard to the well being of migrant children. Several cases have been reported in which young children received accidental injuries operating or working near large tractors. The state legislature of New Jersey is currently considering a bill to allow 12 year old children to work in processing plants associated with farms. The work includes the use of power tools which would be a greater danger to child safety.[36]

CONCLUSION

The facts and situations described in no way cover the total picture of the lifestyle of the Mexican-American migrant family. It is not intended to do so. The objectives of this paper are three: First, to assist those who are interested in further research on the subject by offering an idea or basis for that research. The references listed in the back offer excellent resources. Second, to acquaint those who are unaware of the cultural uniqueness of the migrant family by describing some aspects and conditions in their lifestyle as they relate to issues of child abuse and neglect. Finally, the paper was prepared in hopes that the characteristics described help to create an awareness that migrants are a "high-risk" group in terms of child abuse and neglect.

UNIT 6

MIGRANT CHILD WELFARE

UNIT # 6 MIGRANT CHILD WELFARE

DESCRIPTION OF UNIT:

This unit presents a summary of migrant child welfare services.

GOALS:

1. To present information on the goals and objectives of child welfare services and how they relate to migrant children.
2. To present a summary of some specific needs of migrant children.
3. To present a summary of existing programs that deal with migrant families.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will be able to identify the goals and objectives of child welfare services, as described by the Office of Child Development.
2. Participants will be able to identify some of the needs of migrant children and examine the traditional services intended to meet those needs.
3. Participants will be able to identify existing services in the areas of child care, health care, emergency services and housing.
4. Participants will be able to identify some of the barriers that impede migrant children from receiving those services.

RATIONALE:

Some practical knowledge of the current state of migrant child welfare and services is essential for those in the position of helping migrants.

CONTENTS:

MIGRANT CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

III. Child Care

III. Health Care

III. Emergency Services

IV. Housing

MIGRANT CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

The goals and objectives of child welfare services, as described by the Office of Child Development, include the delivery of preventive, supplemental and substitute care. Traditionally, the specific services proposed to meet these goals include adoption and foster care, residential treatment, institutional care, homemaker services, and protective services.[1] The primary needs of migrant children however, are more immediate and very basic, making traditional child welfare services, such as foster care and residential treatment, a secondary need. The extreme poverty, high mobility, and detrimental camp and working environments of migrant farmworkers make them a group greatly in need of supplementary services. Their low income makes it virtually impossible to provide for their families adequate food, clothing and housing.[2] Therefore, attempts to address these basic needs will make social service agencies more responsive and supportive to migrant families. Services which will have the most impact in the migrant community include supplemental services such as day care, food supplements, health care, emergency assistance and education.

CHILD CARE

In a twelve-county national sample covering approximately 100,000 migrants it was found that they ranked the need for child care second only to housing as the most critical problem while in-stream.[3] Even though there are some services for pre-school migrant children, this type of program is not yet meeting the needs of migrant children. Day care centers which provide quality care, suitable hours, and supplemental services, including transportation for children can relieve parents of psychological as well as the physical burden of caring for their children while they work. Such services typically include medical examinations, immunizations and health treatment, and free nutritious meals. Many centers also offer educational programs, taking into account the children's special needs and cultural and language backgrounds.[4]

Problems with existing programs are the lack of continuity, the lack of a uniform definition of "migrant" and the lack of adequate facilities. Moreover, most of the services provided are through specially targeted programs for migrants rather than general assistance programs. Since, for example, many migrants are not eligible for AID FOR FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN (AFDC), migrant children cannot benefit from programs which require AFDC eligibility such as the EARLY PREVENTION, SCREENING, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT (EPSDT) program for young children. Of all the services provided for pre-school children, day care and health services are the most visible and most crucial in early identification of neglect and abuse cases.[5]

It has been noted that the majority of cases of abuse and neglect among migrant families are cases of neglect due to "environmental" or "situational" conditions. These conditions consist of extremely low wages, inadequate education, few if any preventive health measures, and poor nutrition. Where illness or improper nutrition are involved, one sees cases of "medical neglect" or neglect which centers around the medical needs of the children. Early identification of these needs can best be done through day care and pre-school health services. Thus, the provision of services to mitigate these environmental conditions appears to be one of the more effective ways to reduce abuse and neglect cases among migrant families.[6]

HEALTH CARE

Of all groups in our population, migrants are the most difficult to provide with health care. They travel frequently and are not aware of local services, so outreach must be provided by health

centers. They often do not have their own transportation, so transportation may have to be provided as well. They may not be able to leave work to take their children to a doctor, so extended clinic hours may be necessary. Many migrant families seek health care from non-traditional sources. Health personnel serving migrants need to be aware of cultural differences in order for health treatment and education to be effective. All of these factors must be considered in health delivery to migrants in addition to those problems that they have as a sub-group of the rural poor.[7]

Comprehensive prevention care and treatment, including health education, are essential if migrant parents are to remain well and able to provide for the health needs of the family unit. The health problems of migrant children are often common ones: poor teeth and vision, gastro-intestinal difficulties, upper respiratory infections, and ear infections. The treatment for these illnesses is known. The difficulty lies in assuring that migrants have access to health care. In one California clinic, personnel estimated that about 75% of the migrant's need for health care went unmet.[8] The services most commonly provided to migrants include immunizations, physical examinations and screening, the WIC nutrition program, prenatal and dental care. Specialized disease testing and health education were offered less frequently.[9]

A suggested idea for the implementation of health services to migrants includes the advantages of curanderismo. Curanderismo has for years been classified as the practice of folk medicine. however, there is a great deal that can be learned from the substance and practice of the curanderos. They are an integral part of the Mexican-American community and can be of vital use to service providers, in working with, and understanding the problems of migrant farmworkers. Curanderos have an understanding of the ethos of the migrant lifestyle. They are in general trusted and respected by the community. They are available at all hours and live within the community. The curandero is a culturally relevant force with regard to interaction within the migrant farmworker community. They are an important link between the migrants and service providers. They are a vital asset to the problem of child abuse and neglect because they work within the family. Better usuage of curanderos would aid in strengthening the family and community structure and eliminate some of the problems that foster child abuse and neglect.[10]

EMERGENCY SERVICES

It has been argued that because of the extremely poor conditions that migrants live under, that all their needs should be considered of an emergency nature. Given this context, some of the immediate problems of migrants are those of health and education. Other areas that need to be considered are those related to crises intervention. Often the migrant family has needs for food, clothing, and health care or better sanitation at the camps, and is unaware of the alternatives available to them. There is a need for a delivery system in which an outreach service is initiated in order to make community services available to migrants. Child abuse and neglect cases present a definite need for emergency intervention and services.[11]

The Food Stamp Program is the only social services program significantly utilized by migrants. Migrant's access to social services is restricted by their own unfamiliarity with programs in each locale, community attitudes, and lack of transportation. Language barriers and strong family cohesiveness, as well as staff overloads, extensive paperwork and documentation requirements for eligibility combine to minimize the extent of social services utilization of programs with the exception of temporary financial aid.

Migrant families, unlike other needy families, are away from their permanent homes and lead more tenuous lives. A car accident can leave a family stranded in a strange state with no money left after repairs, if there is enough money for repairs in the first place. Changes in weather or the

discovery that there is no housing at a work site, necessitating sleeping out-of-doors or in a car may create greater risks of exposure than anticipated. The family may simply have to spend their last money on food and have none for gasoline to enable them to drive to a place where they know there will be work. Social service agencies are in general not prepared to deal with such situations other than through what may be inapplicable programs – a family without blankets cannot be helped with food stamps.[12]

HOUSING

Children's physical and mental health, social development, and general well-being are directly affected by this lifestyle and the conditions under which the migrant family must live. The most obvious environmental concerns are evident in the housing conditions of migrant farmworkers. Housing is generally inadequate to accommodate large families, is unsanitary and lacks the essentials for a decent living environment contributes to disease and health problems which are aggravated by, if not a direct result of, these deplorable conditions. The serious consequences of poor environmental conditions are magnified for the large number of migrant families left without any shelters, now common in many regions.[13]

In-stream, the housing most commonly available to migrants is furnished by the employers. Employers who use state employment services are required to provide housing which is inspected and kept up to minimum standards. However, farmers who do not want to upgrade their camps to meet this requirement choose not to use the employment service.[14] The number of employer furnished camps has substantially decreased with the advent of OSHA. It is too costly according to the owners, to meet the minimum safety and health requirements. The result has been large scale closing of migrant camps nationwide. A few states rejected the OSHA program, and use state inspection regulations. One such state is New Jersey. Many state employees in New Jersey were eliminated leaving just a few employees to monitor camps state-wide. Before the OSHA was rejected in 1974, 6,000 inspections of 1,000 labor camps in New Jersey found 18,000 violations. After the OSHA was rejected in 1975, only 200 federal and 300 state inspections were conducted.[15] Many of the small farms employing workers for less than 500 worker days for OSHA regulations, and under ten workers (by many state laws), are exempt from inspection.[16] This leaves thousands of migrant families unprotected by laws that regulate camp housing.

The migrant family is extremely limited in the housing alternatives available to them. This is a by-product of their lifestyle which yields insufficient incomes, forces them to find temporary shelters, and subjects them to exploitation by employers and landlords. It will be necessary in the future to ensure that housing is inspected and brought up to standards required by state and federal law. Federal and state governments should investigate more possibilities for decent, temporary housing arrangements for migrant workers. It is also necessary to expand existing "model" facilities that have already proved successful, such as the state migrant labor camps in California and Farmworker's Village in Florida, to effect greater impact on the migrant housing situation.[17]

It has been shown that migrant children suffer from special needs; needs that do not respond well to conventional social services. And even though they do benefit from the programs available, migrant children's needs remain unfullfilled. If present as well as future programs are to have an impact on migrant child welfare, there must first be an awareness and understanding of the conditions that migrants live under. There must be an understanding of the migrant community, family structure and the impact of culture on the family. Programs and services focused on these variables will be the most supportive and responsive to migrant child welfare.

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TEXAS MIGRANT COUNCIL, INC.
P.O. BOX 917 LAREDO, TEXAS 78040
PHONE 512 722-5174